

these programs have a meaningful impact on employee retention and well-being and provide a much-needed safety net to scores of workers in Wayne County. As such, we appreciate Senator Stabenow's leadership and strongly support the authorization of federal grant programs for pilot demonstrations that will help ensure the establishment and the continued success of three-share health coverage programs across the country.

The "three-share" programs developed in Wayne County provide affordable coverage and quality medical care to working uninsured residents. As you are aware, the two primary three-share programs operating in Wayne County are the Health Choice program and the Four Star Program. Under both programs, workers receive coverage for primary health care, prescription drugs, emergency and urgent care, hospital care, and diagnostic services. Employers, employees, and the County each pay roughly one-third of the premium cost of the coverage, which is less than \$60 per month for employees. There are currently 607 employers, including 3,700 members, participating in Health Choice and approximately 40 businesses, including 150 members, participating in Four Star.

These three-share programs not only provide coverage to individuals who badly need it; but they also help small businesses attract and retain skilled employees. In Wayne County, roughly 280,000 persons are uninsured, many of whom are employed by small businesses that cannot afford to bear the cost of providing a health insurance benefit to their employees. The three-share programs operating in Wayne County provide these employers with a low-cost way of providing health insurance to their workers, which in turn reduces sick days, builds employee morale and loyalty, and ultimately improves our local economy.

Federal grants that would be authorized by S. 2588 could enable Wayne County to expand these programs to serve more persons or include additional benefits. Currently, Wayne County's three-share programs only cover employees and their spouses, as the County is unable to provide coverage to the children of employees. Funding could also support the County's outreach efforts to eligible employers, including reaching out to the Hispanic and Arab American communities to ensure awareness of the program and how it operates. Finally, it is possible that federal grant money would allow the County, working with its underwriters to lower the portion of premiums that employers have to pay, thus providing an incentive to additional small businesses to participate in the program. Numerous other counties would similarly benefit from a federal grant program for three-share programs.

Wayne County's programs have enhanced access to health services for the most needy in our community and we commend your leadership and vision for seeking expanded nationwide access to this model. We are confident other municipalities will find your legislation attractive as well. Expanding insurance opportunities for our nation's uninsured and providing small businesses with a meaningful way of offering health coverage to their employees are significant challenges to many, if not most, municipalities. Three-share programs can positively impact other counties and cities nationwide so that both employers and employees benefit from the continued strength of these programs. Thank you again for all your leadership and all your efforts to address pressing national health coverage access problems.

Sincerely,

ROBERT A. FICANO,
Wayne County Executive.

OAKWOOD HEALTHCARE, INC.,
Dearborn, MI, May 16, 2006.

Hon. DEBBIE STABENOW,
U.S. Senator,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR STABENOW: Thank you for introducing Senate Bill 2588 that certifies and supports programs to provide uninsured employees of small businesses access to health coverage.

As the Chief Executive Officer of a health system in a market experiencing high unemployment and increasing numbers of uninsured patients among the employed, I am hearing of many individuals avoiding visits to their healthcare provider due to lack of insurance. This has resulted in significant decreases in hospital admissions in Southeast Michigan during the past six months.

Of course, the underlying health problems of these uninsured individuals are not going away. We fully expect to see many of them in our Emergency Room when their condition reaches a crisis stage.

While the problem of the uninsured is entrenched and growing, there are potential solutions. Our governor in Michigan is working to create a statewide plan that would cover significant numbers of uninsured residents. While we support this work, we also believe that development of shared resource insurance programs could very quickly begin addressing the problem in a number of local markets.

Oakwood has already established one such program, known as the "Four-Star" health plan, in which Oakwood Healthcare System, St. John Health System, Henry Ford Health System, and the Detroit Medical Center, partner with the Wayne County Health Department to provide coverage to qualified individuals who share the cost with their employer and the county.

We believe this program and others like it offer a timely and viable approach to providing health care access to the uninsured employed by small businesses. It is exactly the approach described in S. 2588.

We welcome the support this bill would provide to build and market plans like ours. While we believe such three-share plans offer the right solution to many employers and their employees, they require significant startup investment. The grants called for in Section 2201 would do much to encourage additional three-share programs, thus providing access to health care for thousands of employed individuals while adding to the viability and competitiveness of many small businesses. We heartily endorse passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

GERALD D. FITZGERALD,
President and CEO.

WWW.COVERTHEUNINSURED.ORG,
Dearborn, MI, May 2, 2006.

Hon. DEBBIE STABENOW,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR STABENOW: I want to thank you for developing and introducing the "Health Care Access for Small Businesses Act of 2006." I support efforts to expand coverage for the uninsured, and I am pleased that your legislation is modeled on the successful multi-share program in Muskegon that provides affordable health insurance options for small businesses. It is this kind of program that should be replicated to reduce the number of working uninsured in our country.

I hope you will find other ways to bring the urgent issue of the uninsured to the forefront of the national political agenda. Nearly 46 million Americans are living without health insurance, including more than 8 million children. As you know, more and more

Michigan families are facing the hardship of being uninsured as cutbacks in manufacturing leave them unemployed or in jobs without health benefits.

The economic impact of the growing uninsured is most evident for states and localities like ours trying to attract job-creating investments. Small businesses often find that insurance coverage for their employees is either unaffordable or simply unavailable. Large employers that do provide health insurance are bearing many of the uninsured treatment costs, which are shifted to them through steeply rising premiums. The result is an uneven playing field for employers.

More importantly, the uninsured often receive care that is "too little too late." Minor illnesses become more severe because care is delayed. The Institute of Medicine has determined that thousands of uninsured people die each year because of this delayed care.

I hope you will work to find bipartisan support for the "Health Care Access for Small Businesses Act of 2006," and that you can continue to support other legislative initiatives on behalf of the uninsured. "Coverage and access for all" makes economic sense because it will mean more efficient and effective care, a healthier population, and a more competitive local economy. More importantly, coverage and access for all is the right thing to do for our community. In a just society, no one should be left behind.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the uninsured.

Sincerely,

STANLEY GOLDBERG.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF 40 YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE TO THE ELIEZER CHURCH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize two distinguished religious leaders in Michigan, Pastor Raymond H. Dunlap, Sr. and his wife, Mother Lillian B. Dunlap. On May 21, 2006, they will be honored for their service to The Eliezer Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of Flint, MI.

Bishop Dunlap, known by many as a "Man with a Vision," entered the ministry in Columbus, OH in 1954 under the guidance of his father, the late Bishop Sandy Dunlap. In 1966, he became the pastor of the newly established Eliezer Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Flint, MI. Bishop Dunlap was appointed district elder of the Northern District in 1977 and 3 years later was named junior bishop at the International Convocation. Bishop Dunlap's faithfulness, leadership, and service lead him to be consecrated bishop in 1983. Bishop Dunlap directed the creation of 13 Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ in Michigan, as well as 3 in Minnesota.

Over the years, Bishop Dunlap has founded several programs, including the Michigan Home Builders, the Apostolic Instructions Deliverance Station, and Anti-Juvenile Delinquency. He also organized the Freedom Train Outreach and was editor of the International Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith. Through these community-based efforts, Bishop Dunlap

has provided much needed assistance and leadership to those most in need.

Bishop Dunlap's wife, Mother Dunlap, has dedicated a great deal of her service to youth ministry. Her work with the Youth Department, Sunday School Department, Music Department, as well as the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ Bible Institute Extension has allowed her to touch the lives of children and adults alike. In addition, she has ministered her faith through several literary contributions, including "Words From the Lord For the Women," "Go To Sleep With Mother's Prayer," and "Mountain Top Prayers." Mother Dunlap's faith has been an inspiration not only to her church but to the entire community.

Bishop and Mother Dunlap have delivered their spiritual message through radio ministry for several years. Bishop Dunlap ministers through "The Hour of Power, for Prayer or to Share". Mother Dunlap extends her message through "The Extension of the Hour of Power—Sleep Well With Mother's Prayer."

I know my colleagues join me in congratulating Bishop Dunlap and Mother Dunlap on their service to the Flint community and on their many achievements over the years. I am pleased to offer my best wishes to them on the 40 years of faithful service at the Eliezer Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ and for many more years of good health, happiness, and service to the community.●

MUNSTER HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVES WE THE PEOPLE CENTRAL STATES REGION AWARD

● Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Munster High School's We the People class on being awarded the Central States Region Award at the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution national competition held April 29–May 1 in Washington, DC. I am pleased that the members of the Munster High School We the People class were among the 1,200 students from across the country that participated in this important event specifically designed to educate young people about the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

I join family, friends, and the entire Munster High School community in recognizing the hard work and dedication of the following members of the Munster High School We the People class: Sara Brown, Sara Farooq, Scott Goodwin, Lauren Hudak, Hannah Huebner, Casey Jedrzejczak, Alexis Jeter, Joseph Kasenga, Emily Lyness, Shobha Pai, Samantha Skrobot, and Matt Westerlund. I also wish to commend Michael Gordon, the teacher of the class, who committed his time and talent to prepare the students for the national competition.

The success of the Indiana We the People program is also attributed to the hard work of Erin Braun and others at the Indiana Bar Association, as well as Stan Harris and Cathy Bomberger.

The We the People national competition is a 3-day academic competition that simulates a congressional hearing in which the students "testify" before a panel of judges on constitutional topics. Students are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles as they evaluate and defend positions on relevant historical and contemporary issues.

The We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution program is administered by the Center for Civic Education and funded by the U.S. Department of Education through congressional appropriations. I am proud to note that between 2002 and 2005, Indiana had 147,497 students participate in the programs offered through the Center for Civic Education, with 7,074,896 participating nationally.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:25 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 5385. An act making appropriations for the military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1499. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow members of the Armed Forces serving in a combat zone to make contributions to their individual retirement plans even if the compensation on which such contribution is based is excluded from gross income, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The message further announced that pursuant to section 214(a) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15344), and the order of the House of December 18, 2005, the Speaker appoints the following member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Election Assistance Commission Board of Advisors to fill the existing vacancy thereon: Mr. Thomas A. Fuentes of Lake Forest, California.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 5385. An act making appropriations for the military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 109

POM-321. A concurrent resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to taking such actions as are necessary to adopt the Senate Appropriations Committee amendment for fishing industry recovery under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to H.R. 4939 making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Appropriations.

Whereas, Louisiana's fishing industry is second only to Alaska's in terms of volume with annual landings in excess of 1.2 billion pounds valued at more than three hundred nine million dollars; and

Whereas, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in August and September of 2005 virtually destroyed the fishing industry in the state of Louisiana, which resulted in the United States Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Guterrez, issuing a formal fishery failure and fishery resource disaster declaration on September 9, 2005, as a result of Hurricane Katrina and a second such declaration on October 4, 2005, as a result of Hurricane Rita; and

Whereas, the United States Congress is currently working on development of the Katrina Supplemental Appropriations Act to which the Senate Appropriations Committee attached an amendment from the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for \$1.085 billion for "Operations, Research, and Facilities" under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act with such funds to remain available until September 30, 2008; and

Whereas, such appropriation is to be used for all aspects of the fishing industry including technical assistance for the states from the National Marine Fisheries Service for oyster bed and shrimp ground rehabilitation; assistance from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for rebuilding coastal communities; planning efforts to reduce capacity and effort; seafood promotion for Gulf seafood; job retraining for displaced fisheries workers; replacement of fishing gear; reestablishment of docks, icehouses, fuel centers, processing and marine support facilities, piers, and warehouses; replacement of private infrastructure other than vessels; and research and cleanup and repaid activities; and

Whereas, such funding is vital to the recovery of the fishing industry in Louisiana and, indeed, to the recovery of coastal Louisiana generally; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to adopt the Senate Appropriations Committee amendment for fishing industry recovery under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to H.R. 4939 making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-322. A concurrent resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to